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Claims

1. Method for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, the method being such that, prior to the communication of the information, a service unit of the communications system is contacted and a request for the communication of the information is thereupon passed to the service unit, wherein the service unit passes the request for the communication of the information to two or more electronic agents which interact with the service unit within the framework of a virtual electronic marketplace for information communication, the electronic agents being respectively assigned to one of the network operators and making decisions, within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, by means of a decision logic, according to criteria specified by the respective network operator, the service unit, prompts the electronic agents, once or several times, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, to submit offers for the execution of the requested communication of information, an offer submitted by one of the electronic agents in response to such a prompt, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, is confirmed to this electronic agent by the service unit as having been accepted, the service unit initiates the communication of the information via the communications network of the network operator to whom this electronic agent is assigned, and this electronic agent communicates negotiated conditions for the transmission of the information via the communications network of the network operator to the network management unit of this network operator.

2. Method according to Claim 1, wherein the request for the communication of the information requests the establishment of a communication connection between a calling terminal and one or more called terminals for the communication of the information via this communication connection.

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3. Method according to Claim 1, wherein the request for the communication of the information requests connectionless communication of information from a first terminal to one or more second terminals.

- 10 4. Method according to Claim 1, wherein , with a prompt to submit offers for the execution of the requested communication of information, the service unit specifies to the two or more electronic agents one or more conditions for this communication.

- 15 5. Method according to Claim 4, wherein the service unit successively alters one or more of the conditions, respectively associated with prompts, until one of the electronic agents submits an offer.

- 20 6. Method according to Claim 1 or Claim 4, wherein the offer submitted by one of the electronic agents in response to such a prompt, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace, specifies to the service unit one or more conditions for this communication.

- 25 7. Method according to Claim 4 or Claim 6, wherein one or more conditions specify the nature and manner of the communication of the information.

8. Method according to Claim 4, Claim 6 or Claim 7, wherein one or more conditions specify the charging of the communication of the information.

- 30 9. Method according to Claim 1, wherein offers submitted by electronic agents in response to such a prompt, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace, relate only to a partial communication of the information

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and the service unit confirms several such offers, so that a complete communication of the information results.

10.Method according to Claim 1, wherein criteria specified by the respective network operator relate to the strategy of the network operator in respect of other network operators.

11.Method according to Claim 1 or Claim 10, wherein criteria specified by the respective network operator relate to the network loading of the network operator.

12.Method according to Claim 1, wherein electronic agents register themselves on the electronic marketplace for information communication and only registered electronic agents receive prompts from the service unit.

13.Service unit for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, wherein the service unit is designed so that, when a request for the communication of information is passed to it, it passes the request for the communication of the information to two or more electronic agents which interact with the service unit within the framework of a virtual electronic marketplace for information communication, the electronic agents being respectively assigned to one of the network operators and making decisions, within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, by means of a decision logic, according to criteria specified by the respective network operator, the service unit is furthermore designed so that, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace, it prompts electronic agents, once or several times, to submit offers for the execution of the requested communication of information, the service unit is furthermore designed so that an offer submitted by one of the electronic agents in response to such a request, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace, is confirmed to this electronic agent by it as having been accepted, and the service unit is furthermore designed

so that it initiates the communication of the information via the communications network of the network operator to whom this electronic agent is assigned.

14. Software product for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, wherein the software product is designed so that, in its execution on a server, it performs the function of a service unit according to Claim 13.

15. Server for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, wherein the server comprises control means which are designed so that they perform the functions of a service unit according to Claim 13.

16. Electronic agent for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, wherein the electronic agent is designed so that it interacts, within the framework of a virtual electronic marketplace for information communication, with a service unit which passes to it requests for the communication of information and, within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, makes decisions, by means of a decision logic, according to criteria which are specified by a network operator to whom it is assigned, and the electronic agent is furthermore designed so that when it is prompted by the service unit, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, to submit offers for the execution of the requested communication of information, it makes a decision, by means of the decision logic, according to the criteria, to submit or not to submit an offer in response to this prompt, and the electronic agent is furthermore designed so that when, through interaction within the framework of the electronic marketplace for information, an offer submitted by it is confirmed to it by the service unit as having been accepted, it communicates the negotiated conditions for the transmission of

the information via the communications network of the network operator to whom it is assigned to a network management unit of this network operator.

5 17. Software product for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, wherein the software product is designed so that, in its execution on a server, it performs the function of an electronic agent according to Claim 16.

10 18. Server for supporting the communication of information via a communications system which comprises communications networks of two or more network operators, wherein the server comprises control means which are designed so that they perform the functions of an electronic agent according to Claim 16.

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